Ingersoll Lectures on Immortality

IMMORTALITY AND THE NEW THEODICY. By George A. Gordon. 1896.

HUMAN IMMORTALITY. Two supposed Objections to the Doctrine. By William James. 1897.

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THE CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY. By Josiah Royce. 1899.

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THE ENDLESS LIFE. By Samuel M. Crothers. 1905.

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LIVING AGAIN

The Ingersoll Lecture, 1920

LIVING AGAIN

By

Charles Reynolds Brown

Dean of the Divinity School
Yale University

"If a man die shall he live again?"

—*Job*

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture.
The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

LIVING AGAIN

WHEN the honor of an invitation to give the Ingersoll lecture on Immortality was extended to me, I at once reread the score of little volumes containing the lectures of those who have preceded me in this office. They were all honorable men, no doubt — as honorable as was Brutus, the noblest Roman of them all — but they certainly showed scant regard for those who should come after them. They have calmly stolen all our best thoughts on this high theme, leaving us poor indeed. When I finished the perusal of their work I could have voiced my own mood in those words of the famous Double who undid another unhappy clergyman, according to the story — "There has been so much said and on

the whole so well said, that I will not further occupy the time."

However, my heart was somewhat assured when I read this generous, hospitable statement by William James. He was a Harvard professor whom the whole world delighted to honor, and he spoke, therefore, not as the scribes, but as one having authority. He was referring to the fact that these lectures were intended to supplement each other, turning the subject of Immortality over in all its possible aspects so that out of the series there might emerge a collective literature worthy of the importance of the theme. "Orators must take their turn and prophets and the narrow specialist as well. Theologians of every creed, metaphysicians, anthropologists and psychologists must alternate with biologists and physicists and psychical researchers. If any one of them presents a grain of truth seen from his point of

view which will remain and accrete with truths brought by the others, his will have been a good appointment." [1]

With this generous interpretation of the commission issued to those who stand upon this foundation, I come to you in my proper rôle as a teacher of religion, bringing you my lecture from that wide and fertile field of aspiration and of high endeavor. It will be in the light of religious faith that I shall bear my testimony to the value and the validity of the hope of "Living Again."

We have received all sorts of heirlooms from the Great War. Huge national debts on which our great-grandchildren will still be paying interest! Hard tasks of reconstruction for the devastated areas! Problems of statecraft which baffle the minds of the leading statesmen of earth! Hundreds of

[1] William James, "Human Immortality," p. 5.

thousands of young men maimed or blinded by the war! The commerce and industry of the whole world disordered by four years of calamity! A spirit of unrest, oftentimes of unreason, among the working people of all lands! The high cost of living which has cut almost in half the incomes of the many! All this has come to us as a difficult inheritance from the Great War.

But it has not been all loss and no gain. We have received assets as well as liabilities. We have not been overcome of evil, and we shall overcome evil with good. We have seen the passing of a wicked political system in the downfall of certain royal houses in Europe. We have seen a fresh manifestation of the essential soundness of the moral element in mankind — the human race taking it by and large has a sense of justice, an instinct for fair play, on which we can safely rely. We have seen the drawing

together of the people by the lessening of race prejudice and religious bigotry. We have seen revealed a capacity for giving and for heroic self-sacrifice of which we had not dreamed.

We have seen the coming of a deeper seriousness in the moral life of the world. In the summer of 1914 many excellent people had become so advanced that they no longer believed in the Devil or in any moral equivalent for the Devil. They thought that this whole idea was "an error of mortal mind," a mere bogie conjured up by the theologians to frighten the unthinking. So the Lord took the world into the wilderness with the wild beasts for four years and showed it the Devil. Evil is a very real and terrible thing in the life of the race, and when it was let loose in organized form it drenched a whole continent with blood and carried grief and pain around the entire globe.

We have seen also as a result of the War the emergence of a deeper, warmer interest in a future life — and it is of this that I am here to speak. It could not be otherwise. Here were millions of men, not old men, with whom the day was far spent, but young men, strong, virile, hopeful, facing death daily and hourly as the commonest of occurrences! Here were the fathers and mothers, the wives and the sweethearts of those young men waiting and watching, knowing that any moment might bring a message which would blot out all the stars in their sky! Here are eight millions of newly-made graves opened to receive the bodies of those young men killed in the war! Eight millions of them, a whole population suddenly transferred from earth to a world unseen! The path of a multitude which no man can number in this generation must lie henceforth in the Valley of the Shadow of Bereavement.

Where are those young men now? What are they doing? Are they still alive? In the face of the bewildering experiences through which the world has just passed we cannot wonder that thoughtful, affectionate people everywhere are asking with an added wistfulness that question which fell from the lips of Job, "If a man die shall he live again?"

The wide reading of such books as Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond;* the more active interest in the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research; the crowds of hungry-hearted people going openly or covertly to the mediums or psychics, hoping to peep through some keyhole into that unseen world; the millions of religious people reading afresh with increased solicitude those passages of Scripture which bear upon the life to come — all this testifies to a wide quickening of interest in this subject. The questions which the Apostle raised nine-

teen centuries ago, "How are the dead raised? With what body do they come?" are being asked today with a new insistence.

It would be difficult to name a more vital or pertinent line of inquiry at this time. Have all those brave young lives been wiped off the slate of existence? Are we here to round out our three score years and ten, or if by reason of strength four score years, and then cease to be, or have we the chance of going on in the fulfillment of some vaster purpose? Does the weariness of the afternoon of life, and the fast approaching evening mean a time of rest and reawakening to a brighter tomorrow, or does it mean the approach of endless night?

Here is a mind eager, active, tireless in its pursuit of truth and in the steady relating of that truth to the interests of life! Here is a heart finely attuned to

personal aspiration and to the sense of social duty! Here is a life in its totality already become through disciplined effort heavily and capably responsible for the well-being of the race! Can anyone believe that it makes very little difference whether the common feeling is that there is no further work to be done by such a person, that this finest form of energy known to the mind of man "fitted to such high and sacred uses" is to be cut off from all possibility of further service by the accident we call death, or whether the common feeling is that what we see here is only the beginning of a service which is to have no end, that such a life is candidate for a destiny which will enable it to outlast and outshine the stars? To raise such a question in the presence of the serious-minded is to answer it. By any conceivable sort of appraisal it makes a tremendous difference!

As one of our own prophets has said, "A well-grounded and steadfast belief in a life beyond the grave is one of the most precious of all contributions which a man can make to the spiritual wealth of his generation. Such a belief is not a chance possession, a trifle won in life's great lottery — it is a spiritual acquisition, something earned by effort, fought for with courage and won by a struggle, maintained in the teeth of opposition by the intrepid endurance of an unquailing spirit, and to be handed on as a rich legacy to others who are also summoned to fight the same battle and whom it is our privilege to help to win the crown." [2]

This hope of "something after death" enlarges and extends our whole conception of the significance of human life. It carries the mind of the race out to the frontiers of earthly experience and bids

[2] Chas. E. Jefferson, "Why we may believe in life after death," p. 48.

it look ahead with high confidence. It calls upon men to gain a more complete sense of the strength and wealth of their being as they behold the full capacity of personal existence under a broad, overarching and beneficent sky. It summons them to "see life steadily and to see it whole" as being able in its victorious march to overcome the apparent defeat it suffers in the physical dissolution we call death.

When this august question of living again is raised, some minds are ready with a prompt and flat denial. "There is nothing in it," they say. "This present life is all there is. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die, and that is the end of everything." I cannot hold with them.

Others are uncertain — with them it is a case of suspended judgment. They have the will to believe and the wish to

believe, but they feel no sure confidence. They are saying to themselves and to their fellows,

> Oh yet we trust that somehow good
> Shall be the final goal of ill,
> That nothing walks with aimless feet
> That not one life shall be destroyed
> Or cast as rubbish to the void
> When God hath made the pile complete.

They "faintly trust the larger hope," but with the emphasis always on "faintly." I feel that there is something better for us all than this uncertain groping.

There are yet others who move forward in high, serene confidence. When the question is asked, "If a man die shall he live again?" they vote "Yes," with both hands up. They face the fact of physical dissolution, firmly believing that personal consciousness survives that change. And they are not all empty-headed enthusiasts unable to distinguish

between fancy and fact. They are, millions of them, sober-minded men and women, accustomed to weigh evidence and to bring all claims to the bar of reason. I do hold with them, and I believe that the ages to come will set the seal of approval upon the validity of their hope. I am here to indicate briefly, but clearly I trust, the main grounds upon which I base that faith.

Let me first ask how far this expectation rests upon evidence which would be accepted in a court of law. Here we come upon a bewildering mass of testimony. It is offered by men who profess to have been in actual communication with those who once walked the earth but are now unmistakably alive in a world unseen. We are invited to witness the tipping of tables and mysterious hand-writing upon slates. We are called upon to listen to strange rappings and

to whispered messages from those we have loved and lost. During the last two years the publishers have been grinding out a generous grist of books and magazine articles dealing with these phenomena. All this has come because there are so many people in the world today who "long for the touch of a vanished hand, for the sound of a voice that is still."

We find those who would brush all such testimony aside as being "incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial." They are confident that in every case it is the product either of unconscious delusion or of deliberate fraud. But when "such men as Henry Sidgwick, Arthur J. Balfour, F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, William James, James H. Hyslop and William Crookes — to name only a few — have asserted after many years of investigation and study that here at least is a great psychological problem on the

solution of which may depend the most vital interests of mankind, one might suppose that the policy of ridicule or of sullen silence on the part of the dogmatic materialist would not avail; and that sooner or later he will be forced to face the evidence and to offer some coherent, intelligible and acceptable interpretation of it." [3] It is only just to listen with open minds to what such men may have to report; and no one would speak lightly of the comfort and assurance which many people have undoubtedly received in this way.

I am frank to say that in my own investigation of these claims I have never seen with my own eyes or heard with my own ears what other men claim to have seen and heard. I am reluctant to credit the full report which some of them make.

[3] Samuel McComb, "Future Life in the Light of Modern Inquiry," p. 30.

The three considerations which weigh most heavily with me against the validity of their testimony are these:

First, the character of the methods employed by these departed spirits in seeking to establish communications with their loved ones here. My dear mother passed away four years ago. I was an only son, and for more than fifty years we were comrades. We read the same books; we cherished the same fundamental interests; we looked to the same abiding sources for motive and stimulus; we enjoyed a perpetual interchange of thought and feeling. For more than half a century she was the strongest, the sweetest, the holiest earthly influence which entered into the molding of my life.

Now she is gone! If it were possible for her to come back and have a word with me I feel confident that she would. I am here with a mind eager and re-

sponsive to any such approach. But if she came I find it difficult to believe that she would seek out some dark, dingy room in the back parlor of a professional medium — that was not the sort of acquaintance she cultivated when she was here. If I learned anything of her mood and disposition during those fifty years, I am inclined to think that she would come to me in the church where I worship, or in my study at Yale where I do my work, or in my home where my final interest lies. And if she should come, I cannot believe that she would resort to table tipping or to mysterious rappings or to the fantastic movements of a Ouija board to manifest her presence and wishes. That was not her way when I knew her. The main methods employed by those who make a business of seeking communication with the unseen world do not commend themselves to me as reasonable.

It may well be that there are in the world certain natures possessed of unusual capacity for detecting and making response to the approach of these departed spirits. To one man may be given five talents of sensitiveness, to another two, to another one. We have gifts differing according to the grace given us. I am not here to file any dogmatic denial as to the possibility of such communication with a world unseen—I am only asserting that to me the evidence thus far offered as to the fact of this interchange of thought and feeling with departed souls does not seem convincing.

In the second place, the trivial character of the communications themselves makes against their credibility. So far as I have been able to ascertain, nothing of permanent value in science or in religion has ever been received from these spirits in the other world. During the

Great War those who professed to be in direct communication with the soldiers who had been killed in battle learned nothing about the movements or the purposes of the enemy, such as might have been expected from a superhuman source. The messages which have come by this strange route have been, as a rule, trivial and commonplace. "It is very beautiful here. We are very happy here. Be good and love Jesus and He will bring you here." Some of the veriest old rakes have been credited with the most amazing reports as to the satisfactory status upon which they had already entered. Has there been proclaimed in that better world such a moratorium of even-handed justice?

Now if this sentimental chitchat is to be taken as a fair sample of the moods and interests of that future world, many high-minded people will straightway lose the desire for it. If these communica-

tions are all that some of the wisest and best of earth can send back from the vantage ground of that heavenly country upon which they have entered, it raises a serious doubt in our minds as to whether we have been in communication with the wisest and best in that upper world.

Furthermore, the steady advance of psychological investigation has already explained on scientific grounds many of the puzzling phenomena formerly adduced by the spiritists as proof positive of communication with the departed. The establishment of the fact of telepathy and a clearer understanding of the methods employed by highly sensitive natures in securing knowledge by these more subtle methods has greatly reduced the area of mystery. The people who once walked and worked in darkness have been compelled to see a great light. The necessity and the occasion for refer-

ence to superhuman sources in order to explain certain occurrences have been steadily reduced by the extension of a competent psychology. There are certain facts of which much has been made by professional mediums and psychics which we no longer see through a glass darkly — we see them face to face and understand them even as we are understood.

We would all rejoice to believe that the main claims of the Spiritists were true. It would go far toward bringing that unseen world upon the map. It would lift this larger hope out of the realm of moral faith and place it once for all upon a scientific basis. If we could send and receive wireless messages to and from that continent of being, which lies below the horizon of earthly consciousness, it would at once render the life immortal intensely real. It

would enable each one of us to live thenceforth "by the power of an endless life." The veil would be lifted so that all might share in the vision of the seer and behold the dead, small and great, standing before God.

But the evidence thus far available does not, in my judgment, warrant that claim. The hope of a continued existence beyond the grave is still a venture of faith. It is a venture made not merely in the interests of a further and higher form of happiness for mankind — it is a venture made in the interest of an immense strengthening of motive for right living and for sacrificial effort on behalf of our fellows. It is a venture made in the interest of more august sanctions for righteousness and more powerful deterrents from evil. But when all has been said which can be said as to the immediate value of such a hope, the hard fact stands that the grounds for the expecta-

tion that this mortal will put on immortality lie within the realm of moral faith rather than upon the plane of demonstrated fact.

I rest my own confidence in the life to come mainly upon these two great faiths, my faith in man and my faith in God.

I

I believe in the validity of human desire at its best. Can anyone name a single human desire which is normal, widespread and persistent which does not have standing over against it a corresponding satisfaction? If all men hunger, there is food for them. If they all want to breathe, there is air in abundance. If they all have the instinct of sex, there is another sex standing over against them with corresponding instincts. If they all have the desire for knowledge and the taste for beauty, there is an ordered, intelligible universe

and a world rich in beauty awaiting the approach of these finer faculties.

The desire must be normal, not some morbid, unhealthy craving. It must be widespread, not the scattered possession of an eccentric few. It must be persistent, not the passing fad or fancy of a single season, but enduring from generation to generation. And when it is thus normal, widespread and persistent, the universe where we find ourselves keeps tryst with it, holding in reserve the appropriate satisfaction. The Creator has a way of keeping His word with the best He has awakened in human aspiration.

It matters not how you may account for the existence of that desire. You may say in pious fashion that a wise Creator implanted it originally, knowing that He would also supply the appropriate satisfaction. You may in more scientific mood insist that the desire itself was called into being by the external stimu-

lus in the environment where the organism found itself. In either case, the argument holds. The integrity of the great order which enfolds us is such that it does not send these normal, widespread and persistent desires upon fools' errands. It does not permit them to lead men into blind alleys. It does not call them into action only to mock them with cruel disappointment. It holds in reserve the realities which match those needs.

And the converse of the principle here suggested also holds true — organisms do not make response normally, widely, persistently to imaginary forms of stimulus. In the long run and over vast areas they answer only to reality.

Now the desire to live on after death and to have those we love live on is normal. I have it. You have it. So has the man across the aisle, and the man on the other side of the globe. It is widespread

— the sun never sets upon that empire of hope. When we go far afield, turning back to the religious beliefs of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, this desire is there in its full strength. When we come down to the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans, it is there.

It must be so, Plato, thou reasonest well —
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality.

And the desire persists from age to age, knitting up the centuries into a mighty trust that humanity will not go down in final defeat before the physical experience which men call death. Why not trust the integrity of the universe here? Why not credit the veracity of this normal, widespread, persistent desire of humanity when it is at its best?

It may be objected that the desire for future life is not universal, that there are those who express a positive distaste

for endless existence, who find relief in the thought that "after life's fitful fever" man sleeps well with no disturbing prospect of an awakening. But may not this professed reluctance to live on endlessly be merely the natural and wholesome reaction from the sort of future life pictured by a conventional and narrow-minded piety?

"How empty and shallow the heaven to which we have often been asked to look forward! A heaven of untroubled bliss with nothing to achieve, and nothing to anticipate; a heaven freed from suffering indeed, but freed also from the struggle of which suffering is born; a heaven in which there is nothing to do but to enjoy year after year, aeon after aeon, a monotonous eternity."[4] From all such heavens, Good Lord deliver us!

[4] William Adams Brown, "The Christian Hope," p. 18.

It is not the desire for a bare continuance of personal consciousness which I am here urging as possessed of high significance. It may be doubted if the desire for such a meager form of prolonged existence is normal, widespread, and persistent. The craving is for a certain type of consciousness which by its worth and beauty enlists the interest and awakens the hope of the race. It is significant that these two great words fell from the same pair of lips and emanated from the same mind, capable of an accurate appraisal both of the content and of the prospects of human existence — "I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"; and "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

It is life we want, but it must be life which is life indeed, life abundant, life eternal, if it is to command our desire.

The life of one dimension, namely length, even though that length were endlessly prolonged, would not enlist our interest. The life desired must have in it the height of unflagging and unfulfilled aspiration, the breadth of interest and of action made possible by growth and advance, the depth of conviction and of purpose needed to sustain this fullness of being. There must be opportunity for self-expression in worthy action, for the interchange of finer forms of influence in a vast fellowship of souls, for progress in all those lines of development which bring the sense of worth and peace. When the future world is thus conceived, we may believe that the number of those who would draw back reluctant to enter upon such a state would become negligible.

"As the universe grows upon us in depth, in subtle refinement, in approximation to what we call spirit, the nega-

tions of materialism lose their weight, and the great idea is taking possession of many thoughtful people that not matter, but mind, is the ultimate reality; and that, therefore, not death but life is the last word and everlasting fact." [5]

Moreover, this sense of permanence in life is a necessary demand of the moral nature of mankind. Raphael would not have expressed the utmost of his artistic genius in painting the Sistine Madonna had he believed that some vandal would tear his canvas to shreds the moment he finished it. He knew that it would hang in some place of honor as a thing of beauty through the centuries. Beethoven would not have expressed the utmost of his musical genius in composing the Fifth Symphony or the Ninth had he believed that the score would be

[5] Samuel McComb, "Future Life in the Light of Modern Inquiry," p. 38.

destroyed as soon as he had completed it. He knew that it would go singing its way down the ages. The masters of literary expression would not have given us Hamlet, Faust, or the Divine Comedy had they believed that their manuscripts would go unread to their destruction. And in the moral field, men and women, taking them in the large, become "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," just in proportion as they become persuaded that their labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Here and there some choice soul with a rare inheritance and exceptional surroundings may show a splendid measure of moral energy and of genuine aspiration without this hope. But one such swallow does not make a summer, nor twenty such swallows. Take all the swallows! We know full well that plain men and women the world over are bearing the heat and burden of many a hard

day; they are ministering faithfully and lovingly to the needier lives about them; they are forgetting the things which are behind and reaching for the things which are ahead; they are striving to bring their conduct "up to the style and manner of the sky" because they feel assured that the results of their work in character-winning and in character-building will last. The hope of "something after death" for themselves and for those they would serve, the sense of permanence in life, uncovers deeper sources of motive and stimulus; it steadies and strengthens the will; it sets their feet more firmly in the way that goeth upward.

The final scene in the life of Socrates as recorded by Plato shows us the passing of a heroic teacher surrounded by his friends after long and serious discourse upon the question of human destiny. It shows us also the high appraisal

placed by those Greeks upon personality as having abiding significance for a world administered for moral ends. They had the sense of the indestructible worth of the human soul. They anticipated not unworthily the radiant promises of the Christian gospel. "As we uncovered the face and looked into the fixed eyes, we felt that the master spirit had gone upon a new and grander errand; that death is but the release from pain, the somber healer of all infirmity, an introduction to perennial health and the gateway into life immortal." [6]

When Professor George H. Palmer wrote of his gifted and beloved wife, "Who can contemplate the fact of her death and not call the world irrational if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit," he was uttering in choice diction,

[6] George A. Gordon, "The Witness to Immortality," p. 179.

as well as in tender affection, the common instinct of every soul that lives from the philosopher with his books to the man with pick and shovel.

The moral nature demands this sense of permanence in life for its own inner sustenance. Compare the moral fruitage of that shallow philosophy of life which says, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die and come to the end of it all," with the moral fruitage of that serene trust which holds that our labor is not in vain in the Lord! Look out broadly upon the moral history of mankind! Where do we find the saints and the seers, the heroes and the martyrs, the spiritual leaders and the great reformers! Do we find them with this hope or without it? Do we find them voting Yes, or voting No, when the question is asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

We all know where they stand. And we also know full well that men do not

gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. They do not gather the best moral results over wide areas or through long periods of time, from foolish delusions or from mighty errors. They gather these best results from the truth. The tree of truth brings forth good fruit, while the false and evil claim will not and cannot widely and persistently bring forth anything but evil fruit. Therefore, because I believe in human nature, I believe that this normal, widespread, and persistent desire for something after death will not fail of its satisfaction.

II

I believe in the life to come because I believe in God. I find sufficient warrant for believing that He is a Being powerful, wise, beneficent. He is above all and through all and in us all. Now it is unthinkable but that this Judge of all the earth should do right. He cannot

be Judge of all the earth on any other terms.

But has He done right if this life is all there is? Has He done right if vice and crime are to go oftentimes undetected and unpunished, if outraged virtue is not to be vindicated and rewarded? Has He done right if He leaves us with this mass of unreason and injustice upon our hands unexplained and unexplainable, unless there are further pages of human history to be unrolled and read in a world unseen? Has He done right if He leaves His own moral accounts with the race sadly in arrears? Has He done right where fidelity to duty has been burned at the stake, and tenacity of moral purpose has been broken on the wheel, while successful villainy has lived on mocking the appeal for justice?

No man in his right mind can believe that He has. His own sense of reason and justice demands for Him a further

opportunity, a broader area for the working out of His purposes of mercy and truth. The character of the Eternal is at stake.

More than that, I am encouraged by the highest spiritual authority in history to believe that God is a Father. Could any man that is a father take his own children and thrust them away into eternal nothingness, if it lay within his power to keep them alive? How much less then could He from whom the whole family in Heaven and on earth is named! How could He thrust away into nothingness generation after generation of believing and aspiring men and women in the very hour when they were looking up to Him in confident trust?

It may be suggested that no earthly father possessed by an honest affection for his children would suffer them to undergo such pain and distress as we

can readily discover in this present world. But it is conceivable that all the struggles and trials to which humanity is here exposed may find their moral justification in a certain disciplinary and educative value as yet imperfectly understood. The entire world-process in certain aspects of its life groaneth and travaileth together in pain even until now waiting for something to declare its deeper meaning. "Waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!" Waiting for that higher type of human character slowly wrought out oftimes in agony and bloody sweat to emerge and take control of the governable elements in that world process in the interest of the spiritual ends for which it was originally designed. In that event the high goal reached at last by the heirs of the promise would vindicate the purpose of the One who ordained the rough road to be travelled by those who would gain the supreme

spiritual achievement. No movement, no process can be judged by the rude and lowly stable where it is born nor by the steep, hard way it may traverse in that period of discipline when obedience is learned by the things suffered. Let it be judged in every case by the throne which it is finally able to ascend.

The prospect of life eternal where souls have been washed white in the stress and pain of sacrificial effort enables us to face the afflictions of this present world undaunted finding there no lasting contradiction to our faith that the character of the One who is ultimately responsible is paternal. But if the spirits of just men made brave and true by their heroic struggle against the adverse forces they had to face are remorselessly blotted out, as soon as they have gained a fair measure of worth and peace, what possible justification can be named for the severe discipline they have

undergone! What possible reconciliation can be suggested for the world as we find it with the character of an Infinite Father unless we posit as the final outcome of all this stress some worthy goal.

There was once an Arab sheik, who became convinced that the terrible deity he worshipped had commanded him to bury his beautiful daughter alive. He made known his conviction to the girl, and with that extravagant filial respect characteristic of the Orient she consented to be sacrificed. He dug the grave with his own hands. He took the fair young girl in his arms to thrust her down into the pit to be buried alive. But at that moment she noticed that in digging the grave a piece of moist earth had clung to his long white beard, which is the pride of the Arab heart; and she stretched forth her hand to remove it as a final act of affection. Her deed of love so touched the heart of the old fanatic

that he spared her life and carried her back to his home. Deity or no deity, he could not thrust away a love like that!

What then shall we say as to the feelings of the Infinite Father, were He ceaselessly engaged in wiping off of the slate of existence the children of his care in the very hour when they were looking up into His face in faith and hope and love!

It is a sound principle of judgment in theology that what is normal in man at his best will be found to be true in God. He has made us potentially in His likeness and image. The Master built his claim of a divine redemption upon the natural instinct of a shepherd to recover the missing members of his flock, upon the healthy impulse of a prudent woman to recover the lost coin to her purse, upon the inevitable outreach of a father's affection toward a wayward son in a far

country. He built his faith in prayer upon the sure action of a father in giving bread and fish and eggs to his hungry children. With that same high confidence in our essential kinship with Him we may well believe that the human desire to have our dear dead live on is matched by the will of our Maker that it shall be so.

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust.
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die,
And Thou hast made him — Thou art just.

If I were firmly convinced that I was doomed to extinction at death, I suppose that I should be able to stand it. I would have to stand it. And when that frightful decree had been executed upon me and upon you, and upon all those we

hold dear, we would know nothing whatever about what we had lost. But He would know — how could He stand it? He would have to live on conscious of the tragedy of human existence leading only to final extinction! Let the heart speak as well as the head in the Great Assize! Let your own sense of what would be just and right in Him, who is the Author and Summit of all being, utter its verdict! "The wrong that pains my soul below, I dare not throne above."

If conscious and aspiring human souls are not to be kept in existence, if the whole human race is finally to be destroyed by the cruel hand of death, what possible object can be named which the Author of the world order as we know it could have had in view? "Evolution has been a long and painful process, in which man has slowly advanced to self-consciousness and freedom. When we

are asked the meaning of this development we seem to find the answer in man — man who emerges from the heart of the great world process; who advances slowly from natural to ethical and to spiritual life; who learns to follow distant ends and finally form ideals which transcend the world itself. Man is a being of large discourse, whose outlook is not bounded by the earthly horizon and the religious conception of his transcendent destiny is in harmony with human aspirations and ideals." [7]

In the same vein John Fiske gave us this great word. "The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of evolution by which things have come to be as they are, the more we feel that to deny the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man would rob the whole process of its meaning. It would go far toward putting us to permanent intel-

[7] Galloway, "Idea of Immortality," p. 226.

lectual confusion. For my part, therefore, I believe in the immortality of the soul as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."

The chief obstacle which hinders the advance of this hope of future life lies in the inability of many minds to picture the continuance of personal consciousness when the brain structure with which that consciousness is so intimately associated has been destroyed by the slow processes of the cemetery or by the swifter processes of the crematory. But it is a fairly well established principle in modern psychology that the sum of all the physical processes does not give us the fact of consciousness. In every case personal consciousness transcends the physical organism where it resides.

This can be made clear by a simple illustration. With the X-ray I am able to see quite through the flesh which

clothes my forearm and to study the two bones and all the hidden articulations of wrist and hand. I note their condition, detect the presence of injury or disease. I can watch their movements under the muscular action which I may initiate. And in all this I am viewing them as something objective to my own consciousness.

Suppose that we had some more powerful and delicate form of X-ray which would enable me to witness those atomic changes and molecular movements in the brain which accompany my changing emotions! By such aid I could then stand before a mirror and watch the physical changes taking place in the brain when I passed from a mood of anger into one of benign feeling, from a sense of despondency into one of joy and hope. In that case, who would be doing the watching? Not the brain itself, for the brain is the thing which is being

watched. It is being observed and studied by an intelligent witness of its movements. What do you call that something which views the brain itself as a thing objective to its immediate consciousness? I call that the human soul which survives the physical change we call death.

The words of Dr. James A. Hadfield, Surgeon in the British Navy, in the introduction to his Essay on Immortality, are suggestive: "I propose to bring forward evidence which will encourage us in the belief that in the course of evolution the mind shows an ever-increasing tendency to free itself from physical control and breaking loose from its bonds to assert its independence and live a life undetermined except by the laws of its own nature. The tendency of the mind toward independence and autonomy suggests the possibility of its becoming entirely liberated from the

body and continuing to live disembodied and free."[8] The steady progress of experimental psychology may in the years which lie just ahead reveal to us the possibility of personal consciousness disassociated from the brain structure with which it seems to have been so intimately bound up. Success at this point would at once roll away that stone and remove that obstacle from the pathway of triumphant hope.

These considerations, which spring from my faith in the validity of human desire at its best and from my confidence in the integrity of the world order in meeting those desires with the appropriate satisfaction, and from my trust in the reason and justice of Him who is responsible for the entire world process, are not offered as proofs that the dead who once walked with us here on earth

[8] Streeter and Others, "Immortality," p. 21.

now walk in newness of life with Him. I do offer them, however, as considerations which must have weight with us when in the absence of any final proof, either positive or negative, we are making up our minds as to whether we will vote Yes or vote No on the question of living again.

My own reliance upon the implications of this faith is vastly reënforced when I reflect upon the fact that Jesus Christ persuaded the sturdy, outdoor men, farmers, fishermen, peasants and the like, who had companied with Him, that He was still alive after they had seen Him die upon the Cross. However it came about, Jesus Christ was more of a power along the streets of Jerusalem forty days after His death than He had ever been during His earthly career.

Nothing is more certain than the fact that when those early disciples had seen their Master put to death by the Roman

soldiers they went back to their fishing disheartened. So far as they were concerned, the Christian movement was at an end. "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel," they said. But now He had been three days dead, and all their hopes were buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

And nothing is more certain than the fact that something occurred which changed those despairing and disbelieving men into radiant, triumphant witnesses of the Resurrection. They now went everywhere proclaiming their gospel of a Risen Lord, sealing their conviction with their own blood. And I have not been able to find any cause adequate to account for that change of front on their part except the fact that Jesus Christ did triumph over death and was able to certify that fact to those who had companied with Him. "He showed

Himself alive" — that was their brief terse, sufficing account of the matter. It was that assurance which furnished the sufficing and enduring basis for the whole Christian movement there inaugurated.

From that hour those early disciples faced the trials and the perils which fell to their lot undaunted. They took life as it came standing up, heartened and empowered by this robust faith. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

When the flower of the English nation gathered in London, filling and surrounding St. Paul's Cathedral at the funeral of Wellington, scarce a man among them could believe that the soul of the Iron Duke, the conqueror of Napoleon, had been utterly destroyed by the hand of death. When thirty thousand people in Boston gathered in and around Trinity Church, crowding Copley Square to overflowing on that cheerless January day when Phillips Brooks was buried, it may be questioned if the most skeptical man among them could have brought himself to feel that the noble soul, who had so often filled that temple of worship with the sense of something divine as he ministered to the souls of his fellows, had gone out in eternal nothingness. When the eyes of the penitent thief turned to his fellow sufferer upon

the Cross, seeing there "a light that never was on sea or land" and hearing those august words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," even he, coarse and rough though his own life had been, could not believe that the soul of the Christ was perishing there in final defeat. In his own hour of pain the thief voiced his faith in his confident appeal, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." In all these high hours of human experience the feeling is instinctive and compelling that this life of ours has permanent worth and significance in a universe manifestly ordered for moral ends.

"Why should we fear death," a man once said "it is life's finest form of adventure?" These words were not uttered by some minister of religion standing securely in his pulpit on Easter Day, surrounded by flowers and with joyous anthems sounding in his ears. They

were not spoken before an open fire at the close of a delightful evening by some man sitting in the easy comfort of his armchair. They were spoken by Charles Frohman on the deck of the Lusitania just as the great ship settled to her doom. He felt that all earthly hope was gone, and this was his last word to a group of friends who expected to share his fate. He had never believed in unhappy endings for his plays — he would not have an unhappy ending for his life. "Why should we fear death? It is life's finest form of adventure."

So be my passing,
My task accomplished and the long day done;
My wages taken and in my heart
Some late lark singing;
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene.

When we are young and strong with all our loved ones around us, this earthly

life, the mere living of it, may seem quite enough. The remote future and that unseen world scarcely find place upon the map of our ordinary consciousness. But as we grow older and the veins are scant of life, when friends are gone and many of our best ambitions lie unfulfilled, when our too brief chance seems drawing to a close, and we are compelled to confess ourselves baffled in many of our dearest hopes, then the life to come is lifted to a place of eager interest and of warm desire.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be," but we live in the purifying hope that we shall be like Him. We stand here manifestly at the summit of created being in this world, affirming that we were made in the likeness and image of the Most High. Because He lives a life unbroken, we hold fast the hope that we shall live also. He will show us the path of life; in His presence there is fullness of

joy; at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

"The children of the Kingdom are the friends of God, building with Him they know not clearly what. They have never known. Every unfolding of the Divine Life in them is a surprise. When they would comfortably abide in the structures they have shaped, there comes always that other surprise as of sad autumn following abruptly upon summer, the deep green changing to the almost taunting brightness of decay — the surprise of corruption so necessary to any new surprise of life."

"How are the dead raised? With what body do they come? That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die! And that which thou sowest is not the body that shall be but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other grain, and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him — and to every seed its

own body. There are bodies terrestrial and there are also bodies celestial. The glory of the terrestrial is one, the glory of the celestial is another. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body."

"When the sun flames into a sudden glory before his setting, there is a moment of sadness and then we seem to hear a voice saying, 'He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go.' When the forms of life with which they have fondly lingered break up and disappear, the children of the Kingdom take Nature at her own bright meaning. Their regrets dissolve into the raptures of coming life — they are the children of the Resurrection." [9]

We cherish the dream and it will not down. We seek and we find warrant for our hope that sometime, somewhere we

[9] Henry M. Alden, "God in His World," p. 270.

shall awake in His likeness and be satisfied in that we too behold the dead, small and great, standing before God, conscious, aspiring, resolute, to be dealt with in the ages to come by Him who is not the God of the dead but of the living.

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